



# Commissioner's Currents

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Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Environmental Law Enforcement, David M. Peters, *Commissioner*  
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Bob Durand, *Secretary*

## Diodati Appointed DMF Director

By Bob Greco

DFWELE Commissioner David Peters has appointed Paul Diodati to serve as the next Director of the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF). Diodati's appointment was approved by a unanimous vote of the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Commission on January 27, 2000.

"I am pleased to announce the appointment of Paul Diodati as the new Director of the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries," Commissioner Peters said. "Paul is an exceptional fisheries management professional and I am confident that he will do an outstanding job in leading Massachusetts' fisheries conservation and management efforts. I would like to thank the Marine Fisheries Commission for their approval of this appointment and look forward to working with Paul and the commission on important marine fisheries issues in the future."

Diodati has been employed as a senior fisheries biologist by the Division of Marine Fisheries since 1981, and has served as the Sport Fish Program Director since 1995. In that capacity, he led efforts to maintain and enhance the Commonwealth's anadromous fishery resources and oversaw numerous fisheries surveys and research projects. Diodati led the evaluation of potential impacts on marine resources, habitat, and fisheries from industrial and residential development and oil or toxic waste spills. He also participated on technical and management bodies to develop research and management plans in conjunction with other state and federal fishery agencies. He is well known for his work with the Gulf of Maine northern shrimp and Atlantic striped bass stocks.

"Paul Diodati has the necessary professional background, work ethic, and commitment to conservation and sound fisheries management that we were looking for in a new Director of Marine Fisheries," said Bob Durand, state Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. "Governor Cellucci, Lieutenant Governor Swift, Commissioner Peters and I look forward to working with Paul on marine fisheries issues that are so

important for Massachusetts' coastal environment, the state's economy, and our quality of life."

Commissioner Peters was assisted in the search for a new DMF Director by a review panel he appointed in December of 1999. The panel members had backgrounds in professional fishery management, academic fishery science, commercial fishing, and recreational fishing. The panel met to discuss the qualifications for a new Director and assisted Commissioner Peters in interviewing all candidates. The members of the committee were Colin "Rip" Cunningham, Allen Peterson, Frank Mirarchi, and Brian Rothschild.

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries is responsible for the protection and enhancement of the Commonwealth's marine fish, shellfish, and crustacea and for the promotion and regulation of commercial and sport fishing. The Division manages, develops, and protects the state's marine resources to provide the greatest public benefit. The agency has over 90 employees and has offices in Boston, Gloucester, Pocasset, Newburyport, and Vineyard Haven. Diodati replaces the present Director, Phil Coates, who retired in February after serving DMF with distinction for 35 years, including 21 years as Director (see story this issue).



*Commissioner David Peters (left) pictured with Paul Diodati, the newly appointed Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries. Photo by Dan McKiernan, DMF*

## Communication is the Key to Achieving Our Shared Goals

I hope you enjoy this first issue of the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Environmental Law Enforcement's newsletter. We are starting this newsletter as a means of communicating more effectively with our constituents. We want you to hear from us about who we are, what we are doing, and where we are going. And we hope to hear from you as well.

This newsletter is just one of many means that we will use to better serve and communicate with the public we serve. We have developed an official logo to make our department more easily recognizable to the general public. We are working hard to improve our department's World Wide Web site and we are presently updating a book that will include information about all state boat access facilities (Public Access to the Waters of Massachusetts). Our "SPORT" licensing initiative is a critical program designed to improve service to our constituents by consolidating and automating the licensing operations of the Divisions of Fisheries & Wildlife, Marine Fisheries, and Environmental Law Enforcement, and by optimizing the number of licensing locations and alternatives.

But in order to communicate and serve you more effectively, we need to know your needs and hear about them. I hope that constituents will send us their email addresses or regular addresses so that we can send out this newsletter and news bulletins to constituents in a timely manner.

I began my tenure as Commissioner a little over a year ago. Shortly thereafter, I announced five top priorities:

- to protect open space and habitat;
- to provide additional public access to wildlife lands and waters;
- to implement the SPORT program;
- to expand the scope of the Riverways Program and foster its work with EOEA's Watershed Initiative;



- and finally, to use environmental law enforcement, education, and information as tools to fulfill the mission of the Department.

This is an exciting time for the department and its agencies, and for those of us who enjoy and care about Massachusetts' wildlife. Populations of deer, bear, wild turkey, and striped bass, among many others, are increasing. Even populations of rare wildlife species such as bald eagle, peregrine falcon, and Plymouth red-belly turtle are rising markedly. We are working hard to preserve open space and improve access to wild lands, rivers, lakes and coastal waters. We will do our best to use this newsletter, our WEB site, and other means to get the word out about what we are doing. But we ask that you tell us about the issues important to you and stay in contact with us so that we can better serve your needs.

  
David M. Peters  
*Commissioner*

**From September 15 to May 15 all canoe or kayak occupants must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved Personal Flotation Device.**

## **“SPORT” Licensing System Running in Boston Office**

By Bob Greco

The Department is pleased to report that the main “SPORT” licensing office at 175 Portland Street in Boston can now sell all of the department’s recreational licenses, registrations, and titles using the new “SPORT” system.

“The department’s main office can now issue fishing, hunting and boating licenses to our constituents with the automated system in Boston,” said David Peters, DFWELE Commissioner. “SPORT has already issued over 21,000 boat registrations and lobster licenses and we are pleased to report that the inland fishing and hunting licenses are now available through the same system.”

“SPORT,” which stands for Statewide Point-of-sale Outdoor Recreation Transaction system, is the department’s new automated and consolidated licensing system designed to better serve 460,000 license holders, including anglers, hunters, lobstermen and people who own boats, snowmobiles, and all-terrain vehicles.

“Implementation of SPORT has taken a lot of time and effort but we believe that this system will ultimately benefit all residents of the Commonwealth who purchase licenses and registrations for recreational and commercial outdoor pursuits,” Commissioner Peters said. “Our next step will be to get the system running at our agency’s satellite offices around the state, and then we will be working to get SPORT in place at city and town halls and retail outlets this fall.”

“SPORT” was designed to improve service to the constituents of the Department by consolidating and automating the licensing operations of the Division’s of Marine Fisheries, Fisheries & Wildlife, and Environmental Law Enforcement and by optimizing the number of licensing locations and alternatives.

Before the implementation of SPORT, people who purchased various kinds of sporting licenses were required to visit different offices in order to obtain them. Once the new system is fully in place, these people will be able to obtain all types of sporting licenses at DFWELE offices, city and town clerk offices, retail stores, and tackle shops.

SPORT is also serving as the Commonwealth’s pilot program for making environmental license transactions via the Internet’s World Wide Web, and it will vastly improve the department’s record keeping ability and auditing process. The system will improve enforcement by making it much easier for the department’s Environmental Police to check licenses. In the future, license holders will receive renewal notices in the mail and will be able to renew by mail or through the Internet.



### **DFWELE Has an Official Logo!**

For the first time since its establishment as a department in 1974, the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Environmental Law Enforcement has an official logo! Better still, the logo is designed to inform the public about the natural resources native to the Commonwealth and the role of the department and its agencies in protecting and managing the state’s natural heritage.

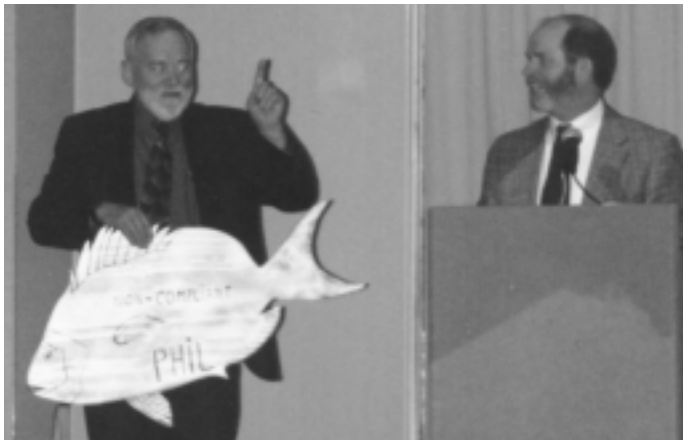
The centerpiece of the logo is an illustration of a wood duck and a striped bass, two native wildlife species which teach us important lessons about natural resource management and the history of the Commonwealth’s conservation efforts. The wood duck was a common species in Massachusetts prior to the 1800s, when clearing of land for agriculture and market hunting began to take a serious toll on the species. Wood ducks were nearly extinct in Massachusetts by 1900, and restoration efforts spearheaded by the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife started shortly thereafter. These efforts included a ban on hunting for 40 years and the establishment of a large-scale wood duck box erection program. These wood duck boxes were substituted for natural tree cavities, which had become scarce due to the clearing of forests. Today, wood duck populations are at historic highs, and “woodies” are enjoyed by hunters during carefully regulated seasons, as well as by bird watchers and others who take pleasure in seeing our state’s wildlife.

The striped bass is historically important in Massachusetts and its restoration represents one of the greatest success stories in the history of marine fisheries management. Striped bass was a critical commercial export as far back as Colonial times and revenues from its sale were used to fund construction of one of the Commonwealth’s first public schools in 1672. “Stripers” continued to be commercially valuable through the years, and they also became the backbone of the state’s growing recreational



marine fishery. Striped bass populations fluctuated somewhat in the 1700s and 1800s, but the biggest management challenges began in the 1900s. Regional efforts to halt striped bass stock declines started with the creation of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) in 1945 and initial regulatory measures set by ASMFC were largely successful until over-fishing in the mid-1970s brought even more serious problems. More stringent controls first implemented in the 1980s and continuing to the present day, largely supported by striped bass anglers, have led to a fantastic recovery that has made for excellent recreational fishing opportunities and a strictly regulated, high quality commercial fishery. Today, Massachusetts is known as the top state in the nation for striped bass fishing.

Rounding out the logo, the outline approximates the shape of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with a wetland scene pictured in the western part of the state and two quahogs representing the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. We hope that it becomes a recognizable symbol for the department and our work in the conservation, restoration, and management of all the state's native wildlife and habitats.



*Former Division of Marine Fisheries Director Phil Coates received some ribbing from Rhode Island's Marine Fisheries Director, David Borden, at Phil's retirement party on February 12, 2000. Photo by Aimee Barrette, Commissioner's Office*

## Former DMF Director Phil Coates Honored and Roasted

By David Pierce, Division of Marine Fisheries

*Following is an edited version of an article that appeared in the most recent issue of the "DMF News"*

Over 250 friends, family, and colleagues attended the retirement party for Phil Coates at the Sea Crest Hotel in Falmouth on February 12, 2000. Phil retired in early February after over 35 years of service in the Division, the last 21 as its Director.

Commissioner David Peters served as the Master of ceremonies for the occasion. He began the celebration

by introducing State Representative Ruth Provost, who presented Phil with a Citation from the Commonwealth's House of Representatives. Signed by Speaker of the House Thomas Finneran and Representative Provost, the citation congratulated Phil and recognized his many years of dedicated service to the people of the Commonwealth and wished him good fortune and continued success in all endeavors. Representative Anthony Verga presented a similar citation on behalf of Senate President Thomas Birmingham and Senator Therese Murray.

Priscilla Geigis of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, on behalf of Secretary Bob Durand and Governor Cellucci, presented Phil with another Citation in recognition of his many years of public service. She also gave him EOE's Green Seal Award.

Marine Fisheries Commission chairman Mark Amarello, representing the entire Commission, gave Phil a ship's compass as a gesture of appreciation. The compass signified the many years Phil provided members with guidance and direction.

Mark Forest spoke on behalf of Congressman William Delahunt, Senators Edward Kennedy and John Kerry, and former Congressman Gerry Studds. He praised Phil as a great fisheries advocate who showed great professionalism and integrity, and highlighted the Senators and Congressmen's views that Phil had left an important legacy. Mr. Forest said that Phil had created "the flagship, the premier fisheries management agency in the United States." On behalf of the Senators and Congressmen, Mr. Forest presented Phil with a unique and special tribute, a "Certificate of Outstanding and Significant Contribution to the Quality of Life for the People of the 10<sup>th</sup> District."

All Marine Fisheries Directors from other New England states also attended: David Borden (RI), Eric Smith (CT), Lew Flagg (ME), and John Nelson (NH). Typical of most retirement parties, the roasting was long and comical with David Borden highlighting Phil's battle with scup management and ASMFC ruling the Commonwealth out of compliance with the Scup Fishery Management Plan. David also presented Phil with a plaque from ASMFC thanking him for his support and especially his years as ASMFC Chairman.

Phil closed his retirement party by thanking his family, friends, colleagues and the many DMF staff that attended. Gracious as always, he bid farewell to DMF and noted that he was pleased the agency was in the good hands of Paul Diodati, DMF's new Director.

We will all miss Phil's leadership, his wealth of knowledge, and his never-ending good humor and wit. Good health, good fishing, and good times are DMF's wishes for this unique man who was our boss and our friend for so many years.

## Curriculum Review Panel Established for Hunter Education Program

By Elizabeth Sullivan Khan, Personnel Counsel,  
DFWELE

Commissioner David Peters has appointed a team of civic hunters and educators to review the curriculum of the state's Hunter Education Program. The panel is made up of seven members: Commissioner Peters; Richard Murray, Director, Division of Environmental Law Enforcement (DLE); William Chmura, Acting Captain for DLE's Hunter Education Bureau; Marion Larson, Outreach Coordinator for the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Education and Information section; Michael Roche, member of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board; Bruce Haman, Hunter Safety Education Volunteer Instructor; and James Morelly, designee of the Massachusetts Sportsmen's Council.

The panel brings a blend of professional and personal experiences directly related to Massachusetts' hunter safety education. Of the seven appointed to the panel, five either are volunteer Instructors or have been volunteer instructors in the past. These panelists have been charged with the responsibility of reviewing the curriculum, making recommendations for positive change and advocating for the Massachusetts hunter's interest.

In early January 2000, surveys were sent out to 250 hunter safety education volunteer instructors throughout Massachusetts. These surveys asked current instructors to let the department know what they think about the program, the administration, and the direction the advisory panel should be heading. The response has been good with over one-third of the surveys returned to date.

The survey results revealed information that should be very helpful to the panel. The majority of those who answered have been volunteer instructors for six to 10 years. Most respondents teach between one and two courses a year on average. Of the instructors who answered, most teach the basic hunter education course, although a large number also teach more advanced courses such as bow hunting or black powder.

Instructors report high numbers of students per course and most feel there should be class size limitations based upon the location and the number of instructors per student. Language problems have not been as great an obstacle as expected, but many instructors reported having students who were illiterate.

When asked if they would be interested in teaching a weekend course many instructors said yes, although there was general concern for people who work weekends and have other weekend activities. Another concern was the tremendous amount of information to be covered in a weekend session.

Instructors were asked to remark on what they liked

best and least about hunter education, to comment on advice for the panel, and to mention what areas they felt should be changed. The answers were many and varied, but overall most instructors felt that Massachusetts has a quality hunter education program that just needs some positive attention from the administration, updated audio/visual equipment and greater resources. Many cautioned that without immediate assistance the program will fail and hunting will become a thing of the past in Massachusetts. A full report on the survey was mailed out to all volunteer instructors and panel members, and copies of the completed surveys are available upon request.

The panel had its first meeting in late February and a follow-up meeting on March 30<sup>TH</sup>. Please watch this space for updates on their progress.



*Major Tom Ricardi of the Massachusetts Environmental Police recently took some time out from his enforcement duties to educate kids at the Southbridge Youth Center about rehabilitation of birds of prey. Tom is pictured here with a screech owl. He also taught area youth about peregrine falcons, red-tailed hawks and bald eagles. Photo by Aimee Barrette, Commissioner's Office*

For a list of current P.A.B. boat ramps, fishermen access sites, canoe and cartop boat access sites, barrier-free sportfishing piers and shorefishing areas send a self-addressed, stamped (\$.55) envelope to:

The Public Access Board  
Mass. Dept. Fisheries, Wildlife &  
Environmental Law Enforcement  
1440 Soldiers Field Road  
Brighton, MA 02135



## Commissioner Announces Start of “Partners in Preservation” Program

By Bob Greco

Commissioner Peters has announced the beginning of a new program in the department to enhance the Commonwealth's open space protection efforts. The “Partners in Preservation” initiative will promote the donation and below market rate sale of land to the DFWELE and its Division of Fisheries & Wildlife. In addition, the program will work to increase land protection partnerships, working with businesses, other state agencies, and cities and towns to protect land they own for conservation.

The Cellucci-Swift administration has established a goal of protecting 200,000 acres of open space by the year 2008 and Environmental Affairs Secretary Bob Durand has announced an additional goal of protecting 100,000 of those acres by 2002. “Partners in Preservation” is an innovative means of helping to achieve these ambitious goals.

The department is planning to hold an event to formally initiate the program this spring, where past land donors will be recognized for their generosity and stewardship commitment. Besides land donors, other potential “Partners in Preservation” could include: companies that sell land to the DFW at below market rates; companies or foundations that donate funds to pay costs associated with the agency's land protection process; sportsmen's clubs or other organizations that donate a conservation restriction on their land holdings; cities or towns that ensure protection of their watershed lands or parkland by granting conservation restrictions under Article 97 of the state constitution; or other state agencies such as MassHighways, the Department of Public Health, or the Department of Corrections that donate land or agree to conservation restrictions protecting their land from future development.

The main goal of the Partners in Preservation program is to increase the donation of lands that enhance the Commonwealth's open space protection efforts. The department will assure that the lands donated under the program offer resources of value, whether they provide wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, or access to beach, rivers, lakes, or other protected lands.

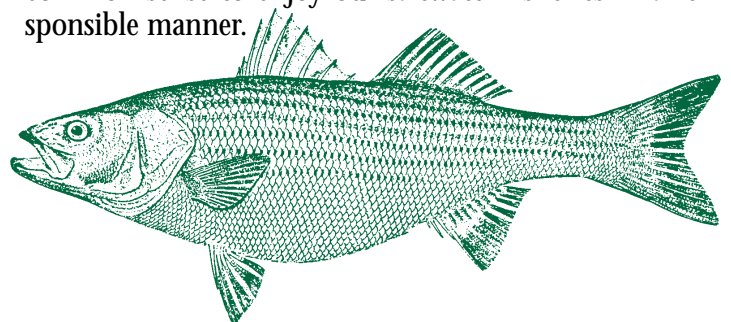
## Catch & Release Tips from the Division of Marine Fisheries

Why release the fish you just caught? Well, it could be that the fish is a sublegal size, you've already caught your bag limit, you may prefer a different species to eat or you just want to enjoy the thrill of reeling in a fish. For whatever the reason, it's important to know how to properly handle your catch so that there's a good chance for survival once released back into the water.

Here are a few tips:

- ❖ Prior to fishing, flatten the hook barb with a pair of pliers or file down the barb.
- ❖ Be attentive and set the hook immediately to prevent the fish from swallowing the hook.
- ❖ Reduce the play time. The longer the fish fights, the higher the stress level for the fish, which reduces the chances for recovery.
- ❖ If possible, leave the fish in the water while removing the hook. If you need to bring the fish on shore or into a boat, first wet your hands or use a wet rag when handling the fish. To help calm the fish, place a wet rag over it's eyes. Avoid dropping the fish on deck/shore or letting the fish thrash against any hard surfaces.
- ❖ If the fish has swallowed the hook, DO NOT FORCEFULLY REMOVE THE HOOK. Cut the line as close to the mouth as possible and then release the fish. In many instances the hook will rust away.
- ❖ Return the fish to the water head first. Revive a fatigued fish by supporting it in a swimming position in the water and gently move it back and forth until it is recovered enough to swim.
- ❖ Don't use the gills or eyes as a hand hold. Use the lower jaw if the fish doesn't have sharp teeth. If hooked in the gills, then use a tool (e.g. needlenose pliers) to carefully remove hook.

As you can see, it just takes a little forethought and common sense to enjoy our saltwater fisheries in a responsible manner.





## **MassWildlife** **Begins Spring Trout Stocking**

MassWildlife has begun the annual spring trout stocking in Massachusetts' lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams. The agency will stock 600,000 brook, brown, rainbow, and tiger trout in suitable waters throughout the Commonwealth between now and June.

The fish have been reared at MassWildlife's hatchery facilities in Belchertown, Montague, Sunderland, and Sandwich. Nearly 70% of the fish stocked this spring will be greater than 12 inches in length and the majority of those will top the 14-inch mark. The allocation by Wildlife District is as follows:

Northeast	129,075
Southeast	106,300
Central	121,575
Connecticut Valley	120,400
Western	122,900

District offices will have weekly updates of trout stocked waters and the information will also be posted on the MassWildlife Webpage at [www.state.ma.us/dfwe/dfw](http://www.state.ma.us/dfwe/dfw). Printed lists of stocked waters are available by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

### **Trout Waters**

**MassWildlife Field Headquarters**  
**Westboro, MA 01581**

## **Help save rare plants and animals on your state tax return!**

Massachusetts has approximately 175 species of rare native animals and 250 species of rare plants that the Division's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program considers high priority for census, research, and management. Protection of these species and their habitats will contribute significantly to the preservation of biological diversity in the Commonwealth as a whole.

Massachusetts citizens can save nongame wildlife and endangered species in the Commonwealth by contributing on their STATE income tax forms or by direct donations to:



**NATURAL HERITAGE  
& ENDANGERED  
SPECIES FUND.**

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## **Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**Argeo Paul Cellucci, Governor**

**Jane Swift, Lt. Governor**

## **Executive Office of Environmental Affairs**

**Bob Durand, Secretary**

## **Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Environmental Law Enforcement**

**David M. Peters, Commissioner**

Commissioner's Office: 617-626-1500

617-626-1505 (Fax)

Habitat Protection Program: 617-626-1500

GIS Program: 617-626-1500

Riverways Programs: 617-626-1540

## **Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (MassWildlife)**

**Wayne F. MacCallum, Director**

Boston: 617-626-1590

Westboro: 508-792-7270

## **Division of Marine Fisheries**

**Paul J. Diodati, Director**

Boston: 617-626-1520

Gloucester: 978-282-0208

Pocasset: 508-563-1779

## **Division of Law Enforcement**

### **(Massachusetts Environmental Police)**

**Richard A. Murray, Director**

Boston: 617-727-3905

Westboro (Inland Headquarters): 508-366-6537

Hingham (Coastal Headquarters): 781-740-1163

To Report Violations: 1-800-632-8075

## **Public Access Board**

**Jack Sheppard, Director**

Boston: 617-727-1843

**SPORT Licensing** (sporting, hunting, and fishing licenses, boat and ATV registration, marine fisheries permits): 617-727-3900

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### Commissioner's Currents

We Want to Hear From You! Send your email address and correspondence to:

Commissioner's Currents

Bob Greco, *Editor*

Department of Fisheries, Wildlife &

Environmental Law Enforcement

100 Cambridge Street Room 1901

Boston, MA 02202

E-Mail: [Bob.Greco@state.ma.us](mailto:Bob.Greco@state.ma.us)

Grafix by Dave Gabriel, Commissioner's Office



Have any questions regarding regulations pertaining to the harvesting of salt water fish species? Call the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries information hotline: **(617) 626-1520.**

**Department of Fisheries, Wildlife &  
Environmental Law Enforcement**  
100 Cambridge Street, Room 1901  
Boston, Massachusetts 02202